

SECTION: CERTIFICATION

SUBJECT: Specific Requirements for First Time Certification Only

ITEM: *Participant Orientation*



Policy Local agencies shall orient participants/guardians/alternates to the WIC program by providing them with basic program information, as determined by the WIC Branch, during the participant's initial certification.

Basis for policy

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 7 CFR 246.7 (a), (b), (j), and (o) | 7 CFR 246.11 (a) |
| 7 CFR 246.8 | 7 CFR 246.12 (p) |
| 7 CFR 246.9 (c) | 22 CCR 40749 (a) |

Scope of orientation

The program orientation shall cover:

- WIC benefits and services,
- Food instrument contents and use,
- Participant understanding of food instrument use,
- Integrated Statewide Information System (ISIS) down time impact,
- Rights and responsibilities of participants, and
- Voter registration information.

The program orientation may cover health services referral information.

Nutrition and WIC authorized foods

Local agencies shall inform participants about the WIC program's emphasis on nutrition and WIC authorized foods, including:

- How nutrition is related to good health and growth,
- The role of WIC supplemental foods in achieving an adequate diet, and
- The requirement that WIC supplemental foods be consumed by the WIC participant and not by other family members.

Reference: For more specific information about nutrition education, see WPM Section 410-20 and your Nutrition Services Plan.

Food instrument contents and use

Local agencies shall provide participants the following information about the contents of food instruments and how to use them:

- Types, brands, and amounts of food available through the WIC program,
- Where, when, and how to redeem food instruments, including requirements to:
 - Use the grocer specified on the food instrument,
 - Use the food instruments during the effective dates,
 - Separate WIC foods from other purchases,
 - Inform the cashier of the WIC food instrument purchases before the cashier begins checking the purchases,
 - Show the cashier the WIC authorization folder, and
 - Sign the food instruments in the presence of the cashier.
- What to do if the authorized food costs more than the maximum amount allowed on the food instrument, including:
 - Selection of a less expensive food, and/or
 - Selection of a different grocer at the next WIC appointment.
- How to report grocer non-compliance.

Participant understand- ing of food instrument use

The local agency shall check the participant/alternate's understanding of food instruments and their use, by giving him/her a written or verbal test. If the participant/alternate's understanding is not adequate, the local agency shall further instruct him/her individually until the local agency is confident that she/he can successfully use food instruments at a grocery store.

ISIS down time impact

Local agencies shall inform participants that when ISIS is down, food instruments may not be available at the same time as the participant's WIC appointment, and explain how participants will receive their food instruments in the event of downtime (depending on the local agency's policy.)

Rights and responsibilities of participants

Local agencies shall inform participants of their rights and responsibilities. At a minimum, local agencies shall:

- Explain that participants must notify the local agency as soon as possible when:
 - Their WIC authorization folder is lost or stolen, or
 - The participant wants to cancel authorization of an alternate.
- Review and provide a copy of the WIC Participant Information Sheet (WPIS) to the participant, and have the participant (or alternate) sign the form.
- Inform participants of the possible punitive action for misuse of food instruments, selling baby formula, or other program abuse, including dual participation and harming or threatening harm to WIC or grocer staff.
- Inform participants of the local agency's policy regarding missed appointments and any other pertinent local agency information.

Referral information

Voter registration information shall be given to participants during orientation.

Local agencies are encouraged to provide written information on other types of health services available, including:

- why the services may be useful,
- location, and
- how to obtain services.

Reference: For more information about health services referrals see WPM Sections 260-50 and 260-50.1. See WPM 260-60 for more information about voter registration.

Next appointment

At the next appointment, the local agency shall verify the participant's correct use of food instruments and answer any questions about program services, using food instruments, etc.
